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The needs of the Yugoslav economy for ship tonnage are increasing faster than new merchant ships can be built. Even before World War II, when the merchant marine was seriously damaged, it was insufficient and in poor condition. It is essential that the limited amount of available tonnage be used as efficiently as possible: that the existing ships be used to full capacity, and that demurrage in port be reduced to a minimum.

Demurrage in Yugoslav waters is especially long when wood is loaded, when general cargo is unloaded, when cement is loaded or unloaded, and when a ship takes on coal for its own use. These delays are partly caused by the technical deficiencies of the main harbors and by the damage they suffered during World War II, but producers and shipping enterprises, and to some extent the Luka i Javna Skladista (Harbor and Public Warehouse) Enterprise, are chiefly responsible. Often ships wait in a harbor a long time to take on wood because the cargo is not ready for loading. The wood is selected and sorted during the unloading operation. The SS Dubrovnik, for example, waited in Rijeka from 8 to 31 October, and finally had to leave without its full cargo.

Unloading 6,000 tons of general cargo from a steamer may take 20 days. Often ships are virtually used as storage space. The SS Livno lay at Rijeka from 16 October to 3 November unloading iron for reinforcing concrete. Although the cargo was urgently needed, provisions for receiving it had not been made.

Frequently one type of cargo has to be pulled out from under another in unloading because it is more urgently needed. If the cargo had been properly arranged according to destination and urgency at the time of loading in foreign ports, much time would have been saved.

About 700 tons of cement or less can be loaded in ships in one day. The figure could be raised if the cement factories would build temporary warehouses to store a certain amount of cement before loading it into the ships. This would simplify loading, as well as save time.

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Yugoslav ships waste much time in loading coal for their own use, because of a lack of loading machinery. However, ships often lose one, 2 or 3 days unnecessarily while loading coal. Sometimes the coal is not loaded, until after the cargo has been loaded or unloaded.

Elimination of half the present demurrage of ships in Yugoslav harbors would permit 12-14 more voyages per year, the equivalent of adding three or four ships or carrying 100,000-200,000 tons more of cargo per year.

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